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Frightening In All Its Implications

RED PAWN, by Flora Lewis; Doubleday & Co., Inc., \$4.95.

Reviewed by
Edward McHugh

Red Pawn is the real-life story of Noel Field, a well-intentioned man from a well-to-do New England family, who betrayed his country, the League of Nations, and, finally, friends in several communist satellites.

Field was a career officer in the U.S. State Department when he was recruited, during the hungry but idealistic 1930s, as a spy for the Soviet Union.

He didn't like being a traitor, so he got a job on the staff of the League of Nations, where he cheerfully continued to spy.

When Hitler set out to conquer Europe and the League of Nations collapsed, Field secured the post of European director for the Unitarian Service Committee, an organization set up to channel privately collected funds and supplies to refugees.

It was not until after the war that the Unitarians began to suspect that their money was being used to keep exiled communist party functionaries from a host of occupied countries in vodka and beet soup.

Field incidentally performed a valuable service for his country by helping to establish liaison for military intelligence between Allen Dulles, later chief of the Central Intelligence Agency and

then European director for the wartime Office of Strategic Services, and the communist undergrounds of occupied Europe, but it was always his communist masters, never the OSS, who called the turn.

Key Role

It was Field's key role in the vast postwar purges that swept Russia's Eastern European satellites, however, which put Flora Lewis, the London correspondent for the Washington Post, on his trail.

Stalin's twisted mind turned the American traitor into an American spy and used him to indict and destroy high party officials who had made his communist acquaintance.

But the purges did not stop there. Everyone who had known Field was arrested. Thousands were executed or imprisoned, and Field's name became an anathema throughout the communist world.

Five years in various communist prisons, however, didn't shake Field's Marxist faith. He and his wife elected to remain in Hungary, where they were still living when Miss Lewis (Mrs. Sydney Gruson in real life) tried unsuccessfully to interview him in 1960.

As a biography, Miss Lewis' book is an extraordinary piece of detective work, marred only slightly by a literary style that is pure Sunday supplement. It is fascinating reading and frightening in its implications.

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